

COCCIDIOSIS

(Red Dysentery)

in CATTLE and SHEEP

SYMPTOMS

The first symptom noticed is diarrhea, and as noted above, blood may be found mixed with the droppings. The animals are listless, eat very little, and become emaciated in just a few days. The tail and the buttocks become stained with the droppings. Finally, while the movements are loose and frequent, considerable straining is noted. A microscopic examination of the feces by a veterinarian can establish a definite diagnosis.

OCCURRENCE

The disease is common throughout the United States and may occur in Texas each year. It is commonly believed that most cases occur in animals that are confined in unsanitary pens or lots. This is true; however, it may occur in animals that are not closely confined. Generally, the cause of the disease is the presence of contaminated drinking water. The water is picked up by mouth from contaminated ground or water.

DAMAGE

When the disease strikes an animal, it may cause considerable damage. The animal may be killed, or it may become so weak that it is unable to work. The damage to the animal's health may be permanent.

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COCCIDIOSIS

(Red Dysentery)

in CATTLE and SHEEP

By

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Coccidiosis is a parasitic disease affecting the intestinal tract of many animals and fowl. The parasite is microscopic in size and therefore, is never observed on casual examination. However, the symptoms resulting from the infection are often recognized. They usually consist of the passage of thin feces (droppings) and may contain blood. Coccidiosis is primarily a disease of the young. In cattle and sheep it is most commonly observed in animals from 4 months to 2 years of age.

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OCCURRENCE

The disease is common throughout the United States and many cases occur in Texas each year. It is commonly believed that most cases occur in animals that are confined in unsanitary pens or lots. This is true; however, it may occur in animals that are not closely confined. Generally, a contaminated drinking hole is responsible for such attacks. The parasite is picked up by mouth from contaminated ground or water.

DAMAGE

When the disease strikes an animal, it may follow one of several courses. The attack may be so mild as to pass unnoticed. However, the recovered animal may well be a carrier of the in-

fection and spread it to other healthy animals. The animal may and often does make a recovery without any assistance. However, if the infestation is severe and nothing is done to help overcome the disease, death may occur. The amount of damage done depends upon the number of the parasites taken into the body and the opportunity for reinfection.

If the animal recovers, with or without treatment, a rather strong immunity from further attacks is obtained.

PREVENTION

Like other parasitic conditions, prevention is the best way to successfully handle coccidiosis.

When large herds of beef or dairy stock are fed out doors, the wet, muddy ground around haystacks, feeding troughs, and watering places presents a special problem. Low spots should be filled in and proper drainage provided so as to permit the ground to dry out from time to time.

Manure should be picked up daily if practicable. Sometimes a change of feeding place is advisable.

In addition to the above sanitary measures, segregation of calves by age is advisable. A common mistake is to introduce young calves directly into a group of animals of varying ages. By dividing calves into several age groups and allowing them separate pens or lots, possibility of infecting these young animals is lessened. This segregation is particularly important to calves under four months of age.

TREATMENT

Calves or lambs affected with coccidiosis should be penned to themselves. The sick animals should be disturbed as little as possible, as movement tends to increase the straining and bleeding.

In the past many drugs have been recommended for the treatment of coccidiosis. Most of them have been based on obtaining either an astringent or protective coating for the intestinal tract.

In the last few years sulfonomides that are particularly effective in the intestinal tract have come into wide use. They have been found to be quite effective in controlling this condition. Several have been recommended. Sulfaguanidine is one that has been shown to be of value. If the drug is given three or four times a day, it is more effective than if single doses are given. However, the total

amount of the drug should not be over 1 grain per pound per day. As an example, a 500 pound calf might need 500 grains, roughly 1 ounce per day. The treatment should be divided into four doses each containing about $\frac{1}{4}$ of one ounce.

We wish to thank Dr. R. D. Turk, Department of Veterinary Parasitology, Texas A. & M. College, for his help in editing this leaflet.

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